TAINTED GRAIL
THE FALL OF AVALON

Start Here!

THIS OPEN & PLAY GUIDE WILL HELP YOU SET UP AND START YOUR FIRST SINGLE-PLAYER ADVENTURE IN AVALON, AND TEACH YOU ALL THE BASIC GAME RULES. BUILT FOR APPROXIMATELY AN HOUR OF PLAY, IT DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY SPOILERS FOR THE MAIN CAMPAIGN.

They still call this place a "farmhold," even though barren fields provide little food, and crumbling walls offer no protection. The last relic of the glory days of Cunanacht is its menhir, always adorned with red ribbons, lit by candles, and with a daily offering at its gnarled feet. As long as the menhir repels the wyrdness, the townsfolk are ready to endure anything.

But last night, the wyrdness came closer than ever before. A man was lost, following the call of his future self. A house on the outskirts of town has turned inside-out, its furniture grown into a bloated outer shell, like barnacles on the side of a boat. For many hours the air tasted of metal and sour milk.

Now, people say your guardian menhir is failing, like many others all over the land.

For you, the night was even worse. The festering wound in your side throbbed as if something tried to tear itself free and join the rolling clouds of wyrd outside of town.

In the morning, a boy comes running to your shack. "Master Erfyr needs to see you! Move, you big goof!"

You chase the brat away with a well-aimed throw of a boot, and immediately start to regret it, as the boot lands in a deep puddle outside your door.

I) Unpack Your Models

To start, take your Character models, one Menhir model, and one Dial (octagonal plastic coin) out of the box

The four travelers are the CHARACTERS available in the game – unlikely heroes, ordinary people of the island, each carrying a taint that made it impossible for them to join the party of champions that recently left their hometown.

- BEOR is the local smith, known for his short temper. He does his best to conceal a festering, unhealable wound in his side, received under mysterious circumstances.
- AILEI is an outcast whose entire family perished in the wyrdness. She makes a modest living supplying healing herbs and roots to the locals.
- MAGGOT is a renegade of the druidic order, whose innate powers are curbed by his destructive addiction to hallucinogenic mixtures and mushrooms.
- AREV is a simple farmer with not-so-simple past. He used to be a mercenary who bloodied his hands one too many times, and now a mysterious curse follows him.

The hooded statue is the MENHIR. Its origin and purpose will be revealed during your adventure, but for now, you should know that:

- You can only explore parts of the island in the range of an Active Menhir.
- Each Menhir has a space to hold a Dial. These octagonal tokens have several purposes: they count down to the moment the Menhir fades away, they can be tossed like coins, and are used by many special rules.

In this Open & Play tutorial, you play as Beor. Beor's high Health and combat prowess can save inexperienced players from some of the mistakes they're bound to make on their first journey, while his Crafting Action provides decent starting equipment.

Set Beor's model (a man carrying a hammer), one Menhir, and one Dial in front of you. Put the rest of the models back in the box.

II) Unpack Universal Markers

Red universal MARKERS are used in many different ways throughout the game. Remove some from the box and set them aside in a pile.

The purple markers have the value of five red markers and are used to represent large piles of Resources. Leave them in the box for now.

III) Take the Blue Character Tray

Take the blue CHARACTER TRAY (above) out of the box. You can find the full explanation of all icons on the Character Tray in the RULEBOOK, but the most important part of the Tray is the triple TRACK used for managing your:

ENERGY – your basic stamina consumed by Travel, Combat, and Exploration. It is regenerated each day (as long as you eat Food and Rest).

HEALTH – your physical condition. Your Energy can never be higher than your Health. Whenever your Health reaches the red zone, you're on the brink of death, and attach the "YOU'RE DYING!" card to your Character Tray.

TERROR – your creeping madness. Once it reaches the top, you start to go insane, making any Actions difficult. Additionally, if your Terror is higher than your Health, you panic in Combat and Diplomacy. Whenever your Terror reaches the red zone, you're on the brink of madness and attach the "YOU'RE GOING INSANE!" card to your Character Tray.

IV) Set Up Your Character

Take Beor's CHARACTER TILE shown above. Turn the Tile so the Setup: Beor side is face up. It instructs you how to prepare the blue Character Tray for Beor.

First, mark the starting level of Beor's ATTRIBUTES. Place red markers in the Attribute slots along the left and right edge of the Tray, according to the instructions on the Character Tile.

This means Beor starts with 2 Aggression, 1 Courage, 1 Practicality, and 1 Caution.

Then, find the T-shaped HEALTH MARKER in the box.

Place this marker in the starting Health track slot, highlighted by two red chevrons (slot 9 for Beor). Now, find the Energy and Terror tracks on your Character Tray, situated on the left and right of the Health track. Place universal markers in the starting slots, highlighted by two red chevrons on these two tracks.

This means Beor starts with 6 Energy and 0 Terror.

Finally, place 3 red markers in the Food slot of the Tray and 1 red marker in the Wealth slot.

V) Insert the Tile Into the Tray

Insert Beor's Character Tile into the blue Character Tray. IMPORTANT: The Setup side of the Tile should now face down!

Please note Beor's unique Character Action (Crafting) and his negative trait (Festering Wound) on the front of his Tile.

VI) Unpack the Open & Play Deck

Your box contains a specially marked 35-card deck. It includes all standard-sized cards you will need in this tutorial. Find and open this deck now. **Please don't shuffle it or alter its content in any way!**

VII) Set Up Combat and Diplomacy Decks

Remove the top card from your Open & Play deck.

Below it, you can see your COMBAT DECK. Take all 15 cards with the COMBAT back, and set them to the left of your Character Tray (do not shuffle them).

Below the Combat cards, there's your DIPLOMACY DECK. Take all 15 cards with the DIPLOMACY back and place them to the right of your Character Tray, next to the Diplomacy-oriented Attributes.

VIII) Set up Your Encounter Decks

The last remaining Open & Play cards are the four Encounters, each of a different color. Place them to the side, face-down ("Your First Encounter" text should face up).

In a standard **Tainted Grail** game, you will be asked to set up four Encounter decks before each Chapter:

- The GREEN deck is mostly used in the wilds and contains natural threats such as wild animals or legendary beasts. Many of them give Food.
- The GRAY deck contains dangers related to the world of man, such as brigands and people driven to insanity by the wyrdness. Many of these Encounters give Items or Wealth.
- The PURPLE deck contains supernatural threats. You will have to discover its significance yourself.
- The BLUE deck is where you'll find non-combat challenges that may happen every time you visit a Settlement. They are resolved using a special Diplomacy deck.

However, in this tutorial, each of these decks will contain only a single card!

IX) Take 7 Starting Location Cards

Find a deck of oversized cards in the box. These large cards are the LOCATIONS you will explore during the game. Each of them contains an ACTION on the front, and each may be EXPLORED, revealing the story and additional interactions on their back.

Take Locations numbered **101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106,** and **107**. Set them aside. This is your Locations deck for the tutorial game.

X) Set up Your Starting Location

Place Cuanacht Farmhold (Location 101) in front of you, above the Character Tray, map-side up.

This is your home. Place your Character model on this Location card. Then, place the Menhir on the Location card. Put a Dial into the base of the menhir so that number 8 is at the front *(this Menhir will go dark eight days from now)*.

Whenever you reveal a new Location, make sure to familiarize yourself with the ACTION on its front – for example, Cuanacht allows you to earn some Reputation once per day.

Additionally, take note of symbols under the name of the Location. There are three possibilities:

Menhir means a Menhir may be enabled and placed on this card.

Settlement means this area is inhabited – some Actions are only possible in Settlements, and some only outside of them.

Dreams mean that spending a night in this Location reveals either a Dream or a Nightmare.

XI) Build the Starting Map Section

It's time to expand your map. In a standard game, whenever you TRAVEL to a new Location, you will ATTACH new Location cards to its sides, matching their Keys to the Keys on the edge of your Location.

IMPORTANT! *You will only be able to attach Locations that are adjacent (either directly or diagonally) to a Location with an ACTIVE Menhir!*

For now:

- Attach Charred Conclave (104) to the right edge of your starting Location (101, Cuanacht Farmhold).
- Attach Warriors' Fair (103) to its left edge.
- Attach Forlorn Swords (105) to its bottom edge.
- Attach Hunters' Grove (102) to its top edge.

Leave locations 106 and 107 in the Location deck – your Character will reveal them later.

XII) Help Cards and Rulebook

Set three different oversized HELP CARDS in front of you. They list available actions, turn order, explain icons found throughout the game, and contain other helpful information!

You may also want to refer to the RULEBOOK to read more about various aspects of the game.

XIII) Double-check Your Setup

It should look like this:

XIV) That's it!

A standard game of **Tainted Grail** makes use of many other components, such as Story Event cards that provide you with Quests, or the Chapter Setup cards. However, for this tutorial, everything you need will be found in this brochure, and in the Tutorial Exploration Journal that will be referenced later.

If you haven't yet read the story introduction at the start of this guide, do so now. Then, go to the next page and start your journey.

Part 1: Start of the Day

It's now dawn. Beor is ready to start his journey. Perform your first Start of the Day routine, following the order listed on the **green Help Card.**

- The card first asks you to remove expired Menhirs and Locations out of the Menhir range – the only Menhir on the map has a Dial (it's not expired), and all revealed Locations are adjacent to this Menhir (you don't discard them).
- **Now, reduce the Menhir Dial by 1.** It should show number 7. The Help Card also mentions Time Tokens, but there are none in play now.
- In a standard game, you would now **reveal an Event card**, but this tutorial has its own Event card, printed below. Read it:

- There are no Guardians to move and you don't have any Items, so you may skip the remaining Start of the Day steps.

Part 2: First Exploration

After Start of the Day, Characters may perform ACTIONS. Each Action in **Tainted Grail** is marked with a special icon that also shows its cost.

As his first Action, Beor should visit Erfyr – to do so, **Explore the Cuanacht Farmhold** Location. To initiate this Action, **pay 1** (move the marker on your Energy track one slot lower).

In a standard game, Exploration would direct you to text on the other side of the Location card, but this Tutorial won't spoil any stories from the Campaign. Instead, **go to the Tutorial Exploration Journal** printed on the last page of the Exploration Journal book. There, **find the appropriate section** (101 - Cuanacht Farmhold), and **start reading!**

Part 3: First Travel

Your Exploration is now finished and you have a new task. It's time to start moving Beor towards his destination – the cursed farmhold known as the Whitening. As you know from the Exploration Journal, the Whitening is north-east of your village. To plan the journey, let's **study all revealed Locations.**

To the east is the Charred Conclave, a dangerous place that will trigger an automatic Encounter as soon as Beor enters it (the rule marked with the icon).

To the north is Hunters' Grove, a place where Beor can gather some Food. This looks better, doesn't it?

Perform the **Travel Action – pay 1** and **move Beor to Hunters' Grove** (102). As you arrive there, check if there are any Locations connected to the Hunter's Grove that you could reveal. You may reveal any Locations that are:

- Connected to your current Location with Direction Keys (the numbers on the edges of the card, for more information see page 10 of the Rulebook).

- In range of an active Menhir (they are adjacent, either in a straight line or diagonally, to a Location with a Menhir model).

In this case, you should attach Location 106 (Fore-dweller Mounds) and 107 (Whitening) to the sides of Hunters' Grove. Both meet the criteria mentioned above. Do not attach Location 113 to the top of the Hunter's Grove, as **it would be too far from your only Menhir.**

Part 4: First Location Action

Beor's new Location has an Action: "Gather Food." Food is an important resource that you consume at the end of each day, so gathering more won't hurt. To activate the Location Action, **pay its cost (2)**. Beor **gains 2** Food – take 2 markers and place them in the Food slot of your Character Tray. The Action also asks you to **draw 1 green Encounter.**

Take the green Encounter card you've placed near the map during the setup. Place it face up so that you have plenty of free space to the right of the Encounter card.

Part 5: First Combat Turn

Read the Encounter card carefully. To win, you need to gather a number of markers in the Combat Pool equal to or higher than the Encounter Value. To gain these markers, you play Combat cards from your hand. **Prepare two Help Cards** – one with the Combat Overview and one with the Combat and Diplomacy Icons. Now, let's go through your first Combat step by step, following the **Combat Overview** help card.

Remember: If you want to know more, you can find detailed descriptions of all cards and icons in the Combat section (page 14) of the Rulebook!

- **Draw 3 cards** from your Combat deck. Remember not to shuffle your deck in this Tutorial!

If you did tamper with the deck, you may recreate it by sorting Beor's Combat cards from 1 (top card) to 15 (bottom card). Card numbers are located along their bottom edge.

- You don't have to check the Encounter's Trait (it has none), and you don't need to pick an Active Character (you're alone, so only Beor can Activate). You can also ignore the Delayed Abilities step (there aren't any Abilities in play yet) .

- Time to fight! Play the **Attack** card. Attach it to the right edge of the Encounter card as seen above. This causes both halves of the Key and the bottom golden Key to join.
  - You may only connect keys with an Attribute icon if you have this Attribute. Beor has 2 on his Character Tray, so the **key connects** and grants you its Bonus. **Place one in your Combat Pool!**
  - The golden bottom Key always connects, and has no requirements - **place one more in your Combat Pool**.
  - Now, let's **check the text of the Attack card**. It has **two Abilities**. The first Ability causes all enemy Attacks to deal 1 more . The second Ability instructs you to **place a on the Attack card** – the Ability itself will be resolved during the next Delayed Abilities step unless you cover it up with another card first.
- Each turn, you may play only one card, plus as many additional cards as you can connect using their Bonus icons. This means any further cards you play this turn would require you to connect the Bonus.
- Play **Ignore Pain** – it contains a that connects to the Key on the previous card. Before placing this card, remove the from **Attack**. Delayed Abilities won't trigger if you cover them up, and you should never place cards on top of tokens or markers.
- **Ignore Pain** has two other Keys. The blue Magic Key requires 1 Magic to be connected. You do not have any Magic at the moment, so you can't connect it.
- The Free Key contains a Bonus icon, **so draw one card**.
- **Ignore Pain** also contains a text Ability. Just like **Attack's** Ability, it triggers during the enemy Attack step ().
- You have two cards left in your hand, but let's not cover the **Ignore Pain** card for now. Proceed to the next phase.
- A quick **Victory Check** shows that Beor didn't win yet (he has 2 markers in the Combat Pool out of required 4).
- It's time for the enemy Attack. In **Tainted Grail**, each enemy has many different moves depending on the value of the Combat Pool. Beor currently has 2 markers in the Combat Pool. Check the **Combat Table** – the Attack for 0 to 2 markers deals 1 . **Move Beor's Health track one slot down.** That's not all! Beor's Ignore Pain card modifies the enemy Attack. It instructs you to add a marker for every point of received from the Attack, so you can add one to the Combat Pool.
- During the End of Turn, you must discard until you have 3 cards in your hand. You have only 2 cards in hand, so this doesn't apply. Now, **draw 1 Combat card.**

Part 6: Second Combat Turn

- The next turn begins. You could finish this battle quickly by playing **Powerful Blow**, but that would mean losing , as stated on the card. Let's start with the **Battle Cry** instead. Its Free Key contains a Bonus, which means you draw one more card.

- You have now drawn the perfect card to end this Encounter. Play the **Throw** card. It has the icon in its key. Additionally, its Free Key gives you more.
- Perform the **Victory Check** – there are **4 markers in the Combat Pool**, which means Beor has won! The Loot is 1 Food - place one marker in Food section of Beor's Character Tray.
- Now, put the defeated Encounter card at the bottom of its deck (in this tutorial, just place it face down near other Encounter decks). Return all played, drawn or discarded cards to your Combat deck and shuffle the deck.
- If you want to, you may play this Encounter again, ignoring any or losses, to familiarize yourself with Combat mechanics. If you are not sure about any of the rules, check them in the Rulebook (pages 14-17).

Part 7: Ending the Day

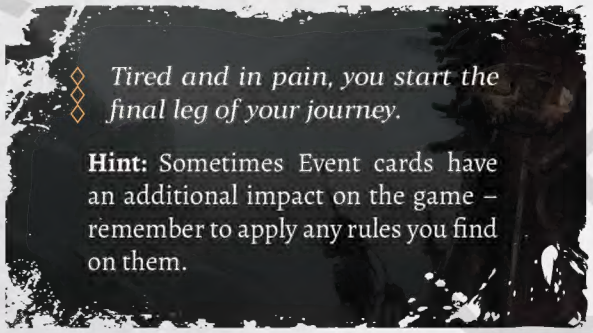
Beor is wounded and has only 2 left. If you look at the Energy track, slots marked as 1 and 0 are red and have the "Exhausted" sign. For now, you don't want Beor to become Exhausted, so you should Rest. **Make a Pass Action** – this will end your in-game day.

- Rest and eat – discard one Food marker from Beor's Tray. Beor gains 1 (move his Health marker 1 slot up). He doesn't lose any , as his Terror is already at 0.
- Restore Beor's Energy to Full – **move the marker on the Energy track back to 6.**
- You don't have any Experience points, so you can't advance your Character. You also don't have any upgrade cards to modify your decks with.
- You're in a Location with the symbol, so in a normal game, you would now open the Exploration Journal of this Location and look for the Dream. In this tutorial, **read the Dream** from the Tutorial Journal instead (remember to look at the correct section of the Tutorial Journal – 102, Hunter's Grove). Dreams contain both story text and rules. Remember to apply this dream's rules (lose 1).
- After you read the Dream, a new day begins.

Part 8: Start of the Second Day

Perform the Start of the Day, just like before:

- **Reduce the Menhir Dial** (to 6)
- **Read the next Event card:**


Tired and in pain, you start the final leg of your journey.
Hint: Sometimes Event cards have an additional impact on the game – remember to apply any rules you find on them.

Part 9: Entering the Whitening

Travel right to Location 107 – **pay 1** and **move Beor to the Whitening** card.

- No new locations are revealed – they would be too far from Cuanacht's Menhir!
- Whitening has a icon – this is an instant rule you must resolve as soon as you enter the Location. The Action instructs you to draw a blue Encounter. Unlike your previous Encounter, this is a Diplomatic challenge! A very inquisitive guard stops you as you enter the Location.
- Place the blue Encounter card face-up, so you have plenty of space to the right of his card.

Part 10: First Diplomacy Turn

Diplomatic Encounters are similar to Combat Encounters. The main difference is that instead of gathering points in the Combat Pool, you will engage in a tug-of-war on the Affinity track, visible on the left edge of the Encounter card.

Diplomatic Encounters also don't have a Combat Table – instead, they may have multiple Stages. To win, you need to "push" the marker to the top of the Affinity Track in each Stage. Fortunately, this Encounter only has one stage.

Prepare two Help cards – one with Diplomacy Overview and one with Combat and Diplomacy Icons. Then:

- Place a marker on the **gray slot** of the Affinity Track. It is the starting point.
- Draw 3 cards.

- **Play the Eye for Detail** card – only one Key connects. It has the symbol - a special diplomacy bonus that varies depending on the Encounter card and the Stage of the Encounter. In this Stage, every yields one . This means you move the marker on the Affinity Track **1 slot up.** Then, **place on the Eye for Detail card**, as it has a delayed Ability.
- It's time for the **Affinity Check** – the marker is not on the highest or lowest slot of the Affinity Track, so nothing happens.
- **The opponent Responds ( ).** Move the marker **1 slot down**. Time to end the turn!
- Discard down to **3 cards** in your hand, then **draw 1** Diplomacy card.

Part 11: Second Diplomacy Turn

- The new turn begins, and Beor has something to take care of in the Delayed Abilities step! **Remove the** from the **Eye for Detail** card. Then, **draw 1 card.**

- **Play Misdirection** as your first card – the bottom connects with a 2x multiplier, granting you two increases. Move the marker on the Affinity Track **two slots up**.
  - Then, play **Threatening Voice** as your second card (the required icon is in the bottom Key of this card and connects).
  - The text of this card instructs you to lose 1 Rep, but you don't have any, so nothing happens. Also, if the Character has at least 2 (and Beor has), move the marker **1 slot up** on the Affinity Track.
- Perform the Affinity Check. The marker is now on the highest slot of the Affinity Track. This was the last (and only) stage, which means Beor wins and earns the Reward. **Place 1 marker in the Reputation slot** of Beor's Character Tray.
- Put the Encounter card at the bottom of the blue deck. Return all played, drawn or discarded cards to Beor's Diplomacy deck and shuffle the deck.
- If you want to, play this Encounter again, ignoring any , or Rep losses, to familiarize yourself with Diplomacy mechanics. If you are not sure about the rules, you can always check them in the Rulebook (pages 16-19).

Part 12: Entering the Whitening

In Part 1 of this tutorial, Erfyr asked Beor to bring him a meteorite ingot from the Whitening, so it's time to **Explore this Location. Pay 1**, but instead of flipping the real Whitening Location card, go to an appropriate section of the Tutorial Exploration Journal at the end of the Exploration Journal book.

Part 13: The Way Back

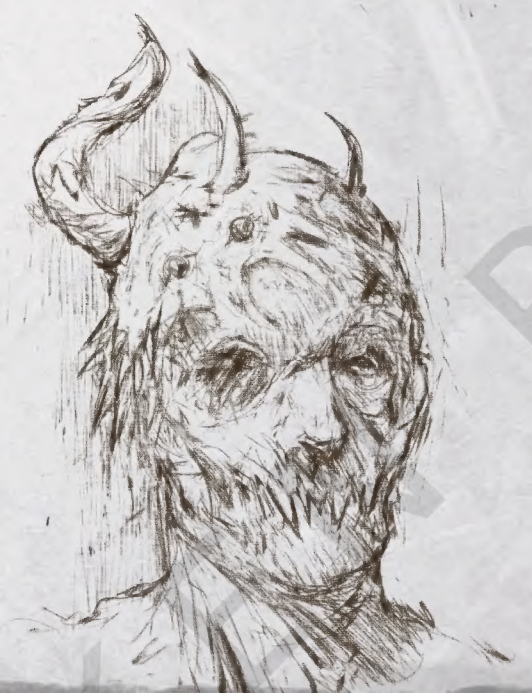
You have to go back to Cuanacht fast! Travel to Hunters' Grove, as before. Perform a **Travel Action, pay 1**, and **move Beor to Location 102.**

Beor has only 2 left, just like the day before. But his time, Beor wants to travel as fast as possible, even at the cost of exerting himself. Perform another **Travel, pay 1** and **move to Location 101**. Beor is now back in his hometown, Exhausted. Take a look at Beor's negative trait listed on his Character Tile. According to its rules, **Beor loses 1** .

Tired, and in pain, Beor is ready to conclude his journey. **Pay 1** to **Explore Cuanacht**. As before, go directly to the Tutorial Exploration Journal.

> **IMPORTANT!** *While this tutorial gives players a general grasp of the game, there are many additional rules it does not cover, such as Parties and Party Actions, Event cards, Chapter setup, legacy Locations, Encounter Traits, and so on. Before playing a full campaign, we encourage you to read the full Rulebook at least once!*

Tutorial Save Sheet

In **Tainted Grail**, Save Sheets are used both for saving your Campaign state and holding different story-triggers (statuses) that change how Locations and non-player characters respond to you. Below, you can find the only status used in the Tutorial game. It has two parts. If you just gained part 1 of the "**Surprising Errand**" status, mark the box numbered "1". If you gained part 2, mark the second box.

Surprising Errand	1	2